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Most Reverend O. E. MATHIEU

Archbishop of Regina

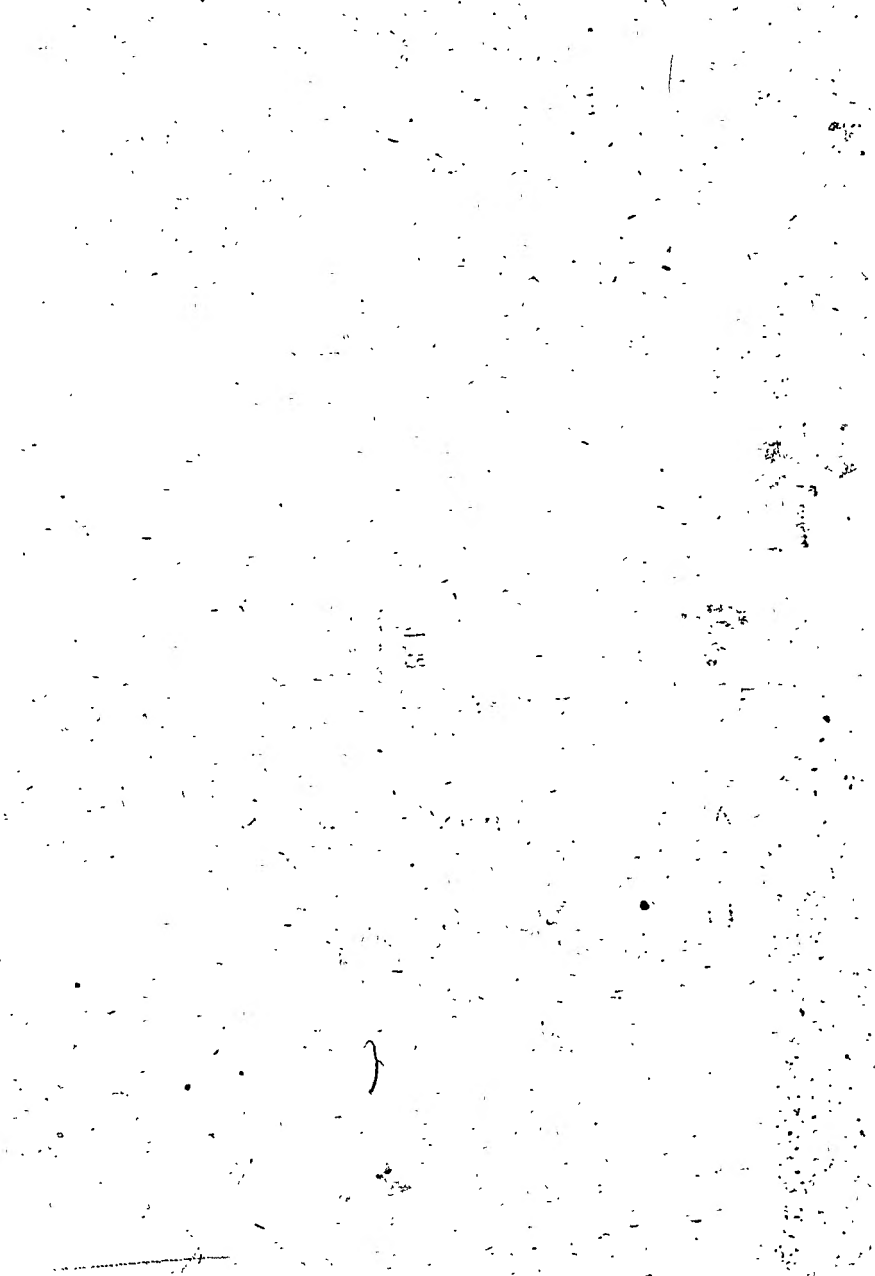
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# The Social Question

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MR. CHAIRMAN, \*

The older I grow, the more my experience in life realizes the sum of truth involved in these words: "the heart perchance finds reasons that reason comprehends not."

Had I consulted reason alone, it would have advised me not to accept the courteous invitation from your esteemed president; it would have warned me how inexpedient it were for me to come with speech before so distinguished an audience as the present, without having had the time to prepare with greatest care a conference fraught with interest and instruction.

But my heart told me that, by accepting this invitation. I should enjoy the pleasure of making myself agreeable to fellow-citizens whom I love more and more, the more I get to know them; my heart told me I might be happy in doing good by instilling proper thoughts in the minds and proper feelings in the hearts of some few among my hearers. Could these lines, rather hastily indited, impart a few minds with a clearer and more apposite notion of the rights and duties behoving a citizen, I would call myself amply repaid for the few hours given to that work; for to a lover of a good cause, there exists no fitter reward than his services therein.

Therefore I have come; here I am in your midst with the feeling that I am bound to confer with you for but few moments, on a question of most importance and the greatest actuality. Of a certainty, I have studied it in the light of a citizen, but I have often asked myself what duty I had to fulfill as Minister of God to help in the solution of a question which commands the interest of all.

I feel no hesitation in mentioning God in your presence. for not hereabout luckily are these people to be found of

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\* P. MacCuaig Anderson.

a kind with him who bragged: "He could relegate God on the deserted throne of his silent eternity." One and all, God be thanked, we look to Christ as the Saviour of Humanity, the Wise per excellence, descended from heaven to give the rich the example of humility, the poor the example of patience, to all, that of charity.

## THE SOCIAL QUESTION

It is our lot to inhabit a country in which the Creator crowded the most admirable gifts a people could dream of. Her beautiful horizons, the richness of her soil, the marvelous variety of her scenery and latent natural resources, her two great oceans, her magnificent waterways, her immense plains and fertile valleys, the incomparable splendor of her sloping hills and the majesty of her lofty mountain peaks, all conspire to proclaim that we live in a favoured land.

In beholding it, I cannot refrain from recalling to memory these words wrung from the heart of a distinguished personage after a visit to Naples: "My God, what can be the home of thy children, how incomparably beautiful must be the heaven thou tenderest them, when the land of their exile can be so beautiful!"

It must be admitted also that nowhere under the heaven can there be found a people enjoying comparative happiness more real than ours.

Yet the fact remains that, here as elsewhere, the labor question is the supreme question of the hour, the one pre-occupying the mind of every man, whether a legislator or an economist, man of Church or of State, a capitalist or a proletarian; it looms ahead the dreaddest of all, whether our consideration embraces the number of heads concerned, or the interest involved in its controversy or the questions adjoining it; whether the difficulties it ushers to the

mind or the dreaded consequences it foreshadows, or the urgency that compels us to give it a solution.

Bossuet, commenting the Apocalypse, said: "I tremble when laying my hand on futurity". Had he lived these days, he would have said with more aptness still: "I tremble when laying my hand upon the present."

The component parts of the social edifice, instead of being joined and dovetailed together, seem to split, disjoint and threaten the edifice with immediate ruin; on all sides there is a feeling of extreme uncasiness. Our epoch reveals this contradiction and this doleful enigma: never has there been such talk about fraternity and in such affected accents, nor was there ever a sensation of less union of hearts.

Society is formed out of the poor and the rich, the masters and servants, the patrons and laborers; all such elements ought to meet the views of Providence and, for the good of the commonwealth, to keep between themselves a relation equitably ordained, should toil on within the bounds of union and, with a scrupulous practice of the duties pertaining to justice and charity; coexist in peace and work in union, to secure universal prosperity.

Instead of that, they that possess and the portionless are taking ground as rivals, nay as enemies even, daring one another; antagonism between classes rises to proportions every day more disquieting; the respect due to right of property is shaken in the popular conscience, and off and on we perceive, now in one point now in another, signs that portend some appalling upheaval.

Capital and labor have come to blows; the rich and the poor array themselves as adversaries. On the one side, there is oft insatiate thirst for storing wealth already in excess and a deplorable setting aside of obligations imposed by fortune; on the opposite side in the array of covetousness.

rivalries, rancor, hatred, violent attacks against those enjoying possession, pending the day when they can be despoiled.

There is at heart a universal grievance the world over; humanity bending its attention on happenings, sorely wonders what is to be the solution of that terrible problem which stands in so threatening and pressing an attitude as to make elusion an impossibility.

The problem is not easy of solution nor free from danger; it is difficult in truth to give due precision to the respective rights and duties of the rich and the proletarian, of capitalists and workmen. What makes the problem still more perillous is the fact that it is speculated upon by men of disorder and bad faith, expert in blinding truth and driving crowds to rebellion.

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Among the causes of this social evil in the present time is, in the first place, the affluence of riches stored in the hands of the few.

The right of property is without a doubt unassailable, but riches must be legitimately acquired and possessed without peril to the public interest. When their accumulation, cropped in by dint of engrossment, monopoly and stock jobbing, outweighs all reasonable measure, when it sterilizes, to the profit of the one man, the soil, commerce and industry of all, its legitimacy cannot be admitted.

A merchant may make vast purchases of corn; let him fill his granaries; but we must draw a line where he drops being a merchant to become a stockjobber and where he builds a monopoly that threatens the commonwealth. Then comes the right, then the duty of society to intervene and oppose his enterprise. That line was not always drawn. And witness what colossal fortunes, such as the most power-

ful kings never possessed, have centred in the hands of a few; the result has been pauperism to the masses and, as a consequence, their discontent.

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Another cause altering relations between the laborers and the patrons is disclosed in the exigencies of industry.

In times past, each master superintended a smaller group of workmen; he knew them, took interest in their welfare and looked to their families, loved them in fact. In the industrial pursuits of our days, workmen are numbered in thousands, they do not see their master, they know him not, care not for him.

In time those laborers have found one another out between themselves; they discovered it their interest to unite, in a way to vindicate their rights and have them respected. It would not do to thwart them in such action; to do it were to make an attempt upon their rights and uselessly challenge them to animosities and hatred it were wiser to appease.

We unfortunately too often recall workmen their rights and not often enough remind them of their duties; too often we lecture them on liberty, on the power of their multitude, and not enough on the rights of authority and the respect which is its due. What a flow of unsound speech goes to fill the ears of the people, unsettle their mind and fever their soul!

We promise laborers liberty. "Do but mention the name of liberty in the ears of men, said Bossuet, and crowds will fall in behind you". We promise them equality. Now to see coming down to one's level them that were looked upon as superior beings, is seemingly to elevate one, to give food to one's pride, that vice which is as much scattered abroad as humanity itself and which in the graphic language of a



German "is to outlive us for a quarter of an hour." We promise them the riches of this world. Such goods forsooth are the only ones left him to desire, who has not remained a Christian; to him there is nothing on earth but gold and silver and it is his nature to long for a share of that gold and silver, and to seek out the most effective means to reach them.

We tell laborers that the wealthy and the patrons oppress the humble and the poor; that capital, a monstrous iniquity, allows its possessors the means of living in leisure and plenty at the laborers' expense; that the latter have a right to claim, instead of stingy wages, their share of the benefits or rather the entire value of what they have produced. We broach to them absolute equality to all citizens and a hundred other insanities and chimeras which at a call can lead multitudes astray and give rise to social perturbations.

With such lore we claim we are enlightening people and consoling them, whilst we are in truth filling them with deception and abuse. Such talk is dishonest and exposes the delated crowds to deceptions that prove worse than the coils we pretend to relieve them from; under the pretext of comforting the laborer, we simply give him up to deception, spite, excitement and demoralisation.

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Of quite another kind should be the speech of an honest man, of a citizen bent upon fulfilling his duties, quite another above all the word of the minister of Christ in the church he has in charge, of him who loathes popularity purchased with lies; to him accrues the part of preaching the Gospel, that sublime doctrine which did away with slavery, restored woman and child to the place they should hold in a family, improved the laborer's station in life.

avored in all manner of ways the poor, the young and all of them who were cast away or thought nothing of by paganism.

It was that doctrine that solaced the miseries of the people, soothed their affliction, warmed their best feelings; such doctrine tends not to delude folks; it does not, it will never tell them that their paradise is on earth, that for them it all amounts to amassing and enjoying, that every master is an enemy; that a day may come when progress can dispense them from work and liberate them from trouble. It voices not such things because such things are false, and there is something worse than suffering, namely deception.

That doctrine which it is our duty to unfold and preach as often as we can do it, tells the man who toils and suffers that toil is the law of humanity, that the work of the intellect is no less a burden than the work of the hands, that every man here below, rich or poor, passes one half of his life in hoping for happiness and the other half in regretting his hope, that riches multiply cares with responsibilities and dangers with pleasure; that social inequalities are indestructible, owing to causes that subsist as does the world and are renewed as do generations; that social superiorities deserve respect; that one must accept without revolt the share that God allotted us of the goods of this world; that wealth is not happiness, that life is a probation and not a banquet; that the true dignity of man is not attributable to riches but to virtue; and that heaven is won through pain borne with christian fortitude; that it is the power of no man to abolish pain; that man's happiness is not found in multiplying his enjoyments along with his needs, but in moderating his desires, governing his will according to divine law; that man's end is not within self, but in God who awaits us at the goal of a life of toil and probation to crown it with glory and immortality.

Such things, such belief are an absolute necessity to the laborer in order to ennoble his condition in his own eyes and make it at least bearable to him; for let us admit the fact: his condition is not always a pleasurable one.

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The social question is of such moment as to threaten a terrible catastrophe in the end. It is our right to expect those that call themselves the ministers of Christ to put all the great influence they possess and the high authority at their hands in the exercise of order, justice and social appeasement; to bend all their possible efforts in a attempt to diffuse amongst those whose salvation they are working, the doctrines of the Redeemer of mankind, these being the only doctrines potent enough either to check the conflict from bursting out or at least to soothe it by depriving it of all the harshness and spite it contains. The return of men's minds to those doctrines of the Gospel is the only footing left us to stand our hope of some agreement or truce upon. They alone could set peace between rich and poor, between humble and great, because they are the only ones to dispense, aloft, moderation, justice and charity, allow temperance, probity and resignation. Christianity nowadays is too scanty in the upper spheres and there is not enough of it below, and egotism threading a path in all direction, the struggle between classes sets society into imminent peril.

Trust we not that the most part of the evils complained of by proletarians be imaginary, nor that the real ones be of small account, nor that they are to be considered as necessary evils, and we are to let things go on without an attempt to stop them; neither should we persuade ourselves that our actual economic regime is the ideal cure, outside of which there is no help in its modification.

We are bound to acknowledge that the actual system is defective, that abuse is hatched therein, that the actual organisation can and should even be reversed and improved, that the evils now experienced are not beyond cure, many of which can be either cured or relieved or made tolerable.

And if there be men qualified to improve that state of things, such are the ministers of God who, in their respective churches, can expound Christian sentiments into the minds of those that have given them respect and obedience.

As often as can be, the ministers should remind their hearers that charity is an indispensable gear in every society. Even the most primitive of all societies, the family, could not subsist without that virtue, propped by justice alone. It were not sufficient in fact that parents feel sure it is their duty to devote themselves for their children; it would not do for children themselves to be penetrated by the thought that they must obey their parents; added to that, there needs be affection which prompts a father to willingly embrace any sacrifice for the sake of his son and the son cheerfully to obey his father. What would be accounted a sore obligation, with only strict justice as a means, becomes a pleasure with charity to side with.

The same means will tell in civil society. It is not enough that citizens be made to understand society as a necessity and that it is their duty to prefer general to self interest; nor will it do for them to admit they must obey their superiors and that they owe one another mutual duties. Such usage of strict justice would only waft into the social body a coldness, a dryness which would check her work. Hers would be the fate of an engine insufficiently oiled and road stuck.

What then is to be done? It is that the citizens be united in the bonds of charity; they must respect, must love the ones appointed to govern them; they must love one another, help one another; let the most fortunate give a helping

hand to the needy, the better educated come to the rescue of the uncultivated; those that are at the head of every social group should devotedly assist the ones placed beneath them; all of men must be sensible of the solidarity which binds them into one body. Let but that feeling exist and sacrifices even of the most painful kind are made easy and cheerful.

Not one of those who wish to call themselves and desire to be christians in fact, whether singly or in social groups, should breed enmities, nor kindle jealousies between social classes, but on the contrary favour peace and kindness.

All must love one another; they must love the members of their families, because those families are God's handiwork, because they build up a primary association which is destined to be useful to them.

They must love all men summing up humanity. Have they not the same Father in heaven? What be a father's claim, if not that love reign between his sons?

Are we not descended from the same father on earth? And whatever our birth, have we a right to deny consanguinity with Adam, whatever the number of generations parting them from the common stock, is not the same blood coursing in the veins of rich and poor, unlettered or sapient? Said Lacordaire: "The blood of Adam within us tells more than all the titles together; it lays us low at the feet of the same patriarch, as at the feet of the same God."

Are we not all brethren in Jesus Christ. Did not Christ come on earth to draw closer the bond between men and the Creator? And how ardently did He not desire to establish charity over the ruins of our egotism! What infinite tenderness in the accents He addresses to His Apostles! "My children, do ye love one another". At the Lord's last supper, when almost to quit the weak fold doomed to be scattered about by the storm, what fervor in this address. "O my Father, make it so that they together be one as we are one,

Thou and I". Unity between men, that was the supreme vow of the heart that has most loved us.

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Everywhere, and in churches above all, laborers should be spoken to thus: Be ye christians, in order that life be lengthened by temperance and enbalméd with peace in your heart.

Be christian, that you may reach affluence by dint of savings and by means of economic institutions you have undertaken.

Be christian so as to be the happiest of men, even though you be the poorest amongst them; that you may reach to feel most cheerful however more than the rest, you might be made giddy with trials, for God is the spring of real happiness and joy on earth, and outside of Him you meet nothing but deception.

Remember that what alleviates suffering, what sanctifies work, what renders man good, strong and patient, is to have before his mind the perpetual vision of a better world shining through the darkness of this life.

Keep well in mind that wealth is not felicity, that life is an ordeal not a feast, that one must provide with patience and resignation, virtues repaid with unperishable reward. Yours is a life of hardship, depression and difficulties, and religion can practicably soothe it, elevate it, have it sunned and transfigured. The Gospel alone can school you to be resigned, honest and content with your lot.

Fall ye not into the deceptive belief that there be men on earth who can elude the law of trouble and toil. Think ye not there be no other labors but material ones, no other fatigue but that of the hands. Rate ye as naught the workings of the mind, the worries, the high responsibilities that are as crushing weights to those that have to shoulder them?

Your chiefs bear the burden of more fatigue than befall yourselves. Of the two halves you are given the lightest; if manual fatigue be your share, theirs is the consuming toil of thought. What of the many hours of night spent in the pursuit of a solution to some intricate business problem! Laborers, as well as yourselves, your patrons deserve the title of laborers, they are your brethren on the field, your comrades in the great factory of life, your companions in work; like yourselves bending under the universal law of toil.

Such truths so well known and admitted by all are necessary to ennoble the laborer's condition in his own eyes and make it endurable; they will moderate his wishes, procure him that comfort of the soul infinitely superior to material comfort and which the wealthy do not always enjoy in the lap of happiness itself.

In our pulpits, we should persuade the laborer to work out the improvement of both his material and moral conditions. To that end, we will advise him to make himself the contriver of his own straightening up, thanks to his application to daily work, his good behavior and sober habits; and by dint of prudent savings, let us draw him aside from such vices as do consume fortunes great or small, scatter to the winds the most indifferent hoards in much quicker time than they would the broadest inheritance. We shall inspire him with such virtues as are content with frugality in life and food, and balance with due economy the scantiness of revenue.

In churches, the laborer will be made to learn the respect due to authority, will be taught that social inequalities are the will of God and that all power and superiority are bestowed by heaven; he will be led to appreciate his state of life by being shown examples that ennoble manual labor and we shall picture to him Jesus Christ, the adorable model, coming down from heaven to meet humanity and

who, for thirty years, like himself labored in a carpenter's shop, sweating under the efforts and handling heavy tools from morn to even-ide, to earn his bread.

It is when recalling the Nazareth workshop that the laborer finds pride in the workmanship making his hands callous and his brow to sweat pearls. It is in churches we can say with profit to the laborer: "O thou man of toil, Jesus a workman calls thee and proffers thee his hand. Take it and be proud of thy divine companion. In his company go thou and walk with head erect on the road-way of life: thou shalt meet no one he had more than thyself loved and honoured". To kings, to lords, to the powerful, to the rich, to men of pomp and leisure, you can boldly say: "My God chose not to resemble you, but with me and for the sake of me he made himself a laborer; mine were thirty years of his life, thirty years of life consecrated to my instruction and consolation and to sign my patent of nobility. Therefore in spite of its dependance, its trials and fatigues, I love my condition in life."

And we should also remind the workman it was amongst laborers that Jesus selected his first companions in his sublime mission. St. Paul often pleasures himself in reminding the faithful that he himself, through his own life, gives them both a lesson and an example of what toil is. He, the greatest of Apostles, he that was listened to in silence by the Areopagus, he that Greece leveled up to her own Sages and who, in the mind of his contemporaries, counterbalanced the genius of Plato, he implored the Thessalonicians to remain faithful in the practice of manual work. he repeatedly tells them that he himself toils night and day and will be a burden to no one.

In churches we shall guarantee the laborer that we intend helping him in having his rights respected. We owe to it all: he has a right to existence, a right to equitable remuneration of his labor, a right not to be trodden under by



excessive toil, a right to domestic joys, to liberty of conscience, and consequently to be afforded accommodations adapting him in the fulfilment of his religious duties. It is his right to demand that wife and child be not devoured by homicidal work, that his partner in life be let free to fulfil all her obligations as a wife and mother, that his daughter's innocence be respected through the workshop.

It is his right also to join in an association to the end of having his interest protected, to unite where he can find a help that can have his rights respected, secure him durable and regular work allowing him to live and let live. that can assure a comfortable morrow and an honoured hearth, where the mother of his family can preside and nothing be in her way to educate her children, where a father can bring home his sweat to the profit of beings that he loves.

But whether or not the laborer be given work: let his salary increase tenfold; if we do not take it in hand to procure him a religion to rest him, elevate him, moralize him, transfigure him, never shall he be happy. "It is easier, says Plato, to build a city in the air than for a people to live without religion". A laborer is not a machine, he has a soul and that soul has need of churches wherein he goes and kneels down, where he can feel himself akin to any child of God, equal to all others, where he can repeat to himself the words of the Royal Prophet: "Let us praise the Lord for he hath looked unto the poor in his misery and he hath raised him among the princes."

There in the church, the laborer will forget the care and toil of actual life. He will carry back to his home that joy of the soul compared to which all the worldly pleasures look stale and unsavoury, that spiritual bliss, those sweet feelings, which attend and follow the practice of duty, and brought the Prophet to exclaim: "Happy the people of whom God is the supreme Master".

There in the church, the laborer will go and sit beside the rich man; he will feel himself at home, will recover the feeling of dignity too often weakened in him; he will forget his fatigue, his trials; something good, sweet, pure and strong will imbibe his soul; his brow will rise to the wind of immortal hopes and, for a time, the heavy weight of life, the harsh inequality of his condition will weigh something less upon his everburdened shoulders.

There in the church, better than any where else, he will understand that the end of life is not in life itself, the goal of man not in storing perishable riches; that he may build and adorn his dwelling, but could at the same time bear in mind that such habitations are only as tents of a day's lasting; that there is no where in this world a permanent city and he is striding towards the glorious city of life to come.

There in the church, rich and poor men will join in the house of our common Father and all with brotherly feelings in them. The christian doctrine preached from the pulpit will remind them that, in the presence of God, great or small, wealthy or poor, all are united in the bonds of a common worship as they are held in the bonds of a common nature; that in as much as all of them breathe the same air, eat of the same bread, sleep the same sleep and are doomed to be imbedded in the same last field of rest, one as all as well, are made christians by the same christening, fortified by the one grace, exposed to the same faults, forgiven through the same mercy and invited into the same heaven.

There in the church, the laborer will be reminded that work with its accompanying sufferings is the law of the present life; that rest with its consequent happiness will be his recompense beyond the tomb. He will be told that God contemplates him at his work, counts his steps, measures his trials; that in the sight of the Almighty, man merits by his work and by suffering, and that he should not despair in

the hour of affliction, for it will be short and followed by triumph.

Under the influence of these elevated thoughts, these beautiful hopes, the heart of the workman will be dilated, his courage will be reanimated, his austere duties will appear less hard and resignation will raise him up instead of depressing him.

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It is at church as well that we can address the leaders and employers and beg them to help improving the material and moral lot of workmen.

They are to be told that Providence having fated all men to live in a body, has formed humanity into one immense family, wherein the ones having superiority in intellect, in wealth and employment, must give a hand to the ignorant, to the poor and to the young.

They are to be told that the conditions in social life are and will necessarily remain unequal; but must nevertheless be made to conciliate and harmonize together, if mutual justice and christian fraternity be the practice of the day; and that, in the work towards solidarity, it is needful that the upper classes simply come to join those below them.

They are to be told that what constitutes the length and worth of days is the good deeds which fill them. We work out our own happiness only in trying to procure the happiness of others. Life is not an egotism to be satisfied but a devotedness to be exercised; and in order to be happy in this world, we need only have the common sense to possess a good heart.

Employers have laborers working for them and thereby enriching them. Let them have the profits of the industry they have created, in which they displayed their talents and for which they experience all the vicissitudes of profits or loss, it is but justice. But they greatly err if they have it in

their minds that they have no obligations towards the laborers in their employ.

Their factory establishes a family of which they stand the heads. They should then be to their workmen what a father is to his children; they should look to their comfort and good name. Such constraint on their part might prove somewhat a burdensome task but it is a necessary one. Woe to them and to the association of which they form a part, if they take to considering work as a commodity submitted like other ware to the law of offer and demand. Masters must not deal with workmen as with simple machines of produce whose capacity is to be registered so they be accurately stocked with bread instead of coal.

Unluckily there were masters who, for reasons rather fickle, unscrupulously lowered the wages without minding the desolation they were about to spread in the hearts of poor families. If sickness laid on the sick bed one of their poor servants, they would not so much as get informed whether he fell a prey to want or had to bear the horrible anguish of a father with not a mouthful of bread to feed his children in tears, nor his wife in despair. Such masters had but one care, namely to find out a substitute who could do the same work and at a smaller price, if it were possible.

Such behaviour is evidently not a christian one. It could be accounted for, when men were plunged in the horrors of paganism; there was reason for it when the greatest talents taught that "salary was but the price of slavery" (Plato); that "the work of an artisan is ignoble work" (Aristotle); that "laborers are the scum of the city" (Zenophon); that "a people is a multitude composed of slaves, scoundrels and poor men" (Cicero); but it must be treated with contempt from the time when God became the son of a carpenter, when the architect of the world overhead consented to be at one and the same time the heir to the plane of Joseph and the sceptre of David, when he pleased to consent in

being one of the hands in a shop, when he taught men his doctrine and regenerated the world by ushering humanity unto the path to duty.

We know now that all men are brethren, they have the same origin, the same end, they all have "a common master in heaven, who will give no eye to the conditions of personalities" (St. Paul, to the Ephesians). We are aware that wealth was not given man that he might procure for himself with greater ease every material enjoyment; but in order that he may make himself God's treasurer on earth. We know that we must be as Christ who came not on this earth to be waited on but to wait on others, and that we must shrink from the example of those rich heathens who exert over their servants a tyrannical and unreasonable domination.

That is the doctrine we must preach out and have the employers to understand and put into practice, if they wish their country to remain free from such commotions as Europe has been shaken with for a century. They must be thoroughly convinced that between employers and employees there is something else than a simple question of wages. Let them grant their servants the protection that is their due and they will be paid in return with the obedience they have a right to. Let them show some interest in, some affection to the working hands and gratitude will repay them. In a word, let them prove good patrons, meaning in the sense of the christian word, like fathers having at heart the well being of their workmen, and they will witness peace dwelling in their factories, they will enjoy the exquisite pleasure derived from the conviction of being loved and having done one's duty. Be it their hearty intent to pay their hands such wages as will enable them to a decent living.

Of course there is great difficulty in bringing about with accuracy an equitable standard of wages; but there is one

rule that cannot be contested: namely that a laborer who is laborious, thrifty and steady, should be enabled to live and help the living of his own folks decently well by his own work.

In making up the assessment of due salary, christian masters with a conscience in them must not only be just, that is strict duty, but they must be beyond that point. They are to remember that they have to deal with brethren and must not grieve them; they must be of a giving and generous mood.

The desideratum should be thus: that the connexions between rich and poor, between masters and laborers be less frigid. A rich man does give alms, we admit, we affirm it with pleasure; but he is not familiar enough with the path leading to the door of the one in pain; he is not often enough seen to climb the stairs to the cold and naked home of those that have nothing but rags for a covering and tears for a consolation. They are honest those employers of ours: they faithfully pay up to the bargain with the men, but it is all up with their duty from that moment and they think there is nothing more to do.

Let then the master show the workman that he himself nurses ambition to do him good, that he holds wealth, talent, power and leisure from God to use them in the service of the needy; that he loves the destitute not only when far apart and proffering his help through alien hands, nay but just as much when in close proximity with them, where he can in person, with zeal and disinterestedness work the improvement of their conditions.

Let the master, the rich man himself restore social equilibrium by willingly abdicating his might into the hands of Christ the poor. Once a day, once a week at least, when tired of exerting his command over other men, let him for one short hour steal away from such wearisome power, clamber up the crumbling steps to some miserable hovel and

there, sitting at the fire grate of a poor wretched being or leaning over the pallet of a crippled one whom he will address as a brother, let him prove a real christian by bending down to him and adapting his own to the humble grandeur of the Divine Master who, God that He was, has none the less debased himself down to living the life of a bondman and dying the death of one.

It is certain that connexions between the different classes of society should be more amiable, more charitable. We want societies in which the poor should learn to be acquainted with the man of wealth and to love him when he showed him some interest and affection. Such building up of societies would give the leading classes a chance to instruct the people and to give them notions of political and domestic economy which would help them improving their position.

In one of Raphael's greatest painting, God the Father is shown causing creation to burst from out of chaos, his foot meanwhile spurning darkness away. Let the higher classes of our society repel darkness from the sight of our people; let them lighten their minds and help leading their will-power to good things; let them master their hearts; let them not isolate themselves from the working classes but build up associations where all elements of society come into close contact.

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Those who are burdened with state government have a mission to fulfill in regard to every member of society, to foster the welfare of all, whether poor or rich undoubtedly, but over and above all other considerations, they are bound to defend and protect with special solicitude the right of the poor and the common people. The government must ferret out the material conditions in the work shop and the factory; it must see to it that workmen be not subjected to

a work exceeding their physical strength, that they be not looked upon as a simple wheel-work in the machinery of production, nay but rather as moral and religious beings.

A government fulfills a sacred charge when it makes it a point that a wife be not diverted from the internal occupations of the household and she barter not the grand title of a mother against that of a working maid and that young children be not dragged into the pestilential atmosphere of a factory.

A government realizes an idea of deep christianity, the idea of keen solidarity between the master and the workmen, when it extends the latter his protecting arm against the consequences entailed through age or sickness, when it works out some indemnity for them in cases of involuntary accidents to which they might fall the victims while at work.

A government deserves credit if it endeavours to do away with causes of demoralisation to which could be exposed citizens from the several classes of society, when by legal prescriptions he secures to all of them a weekly day of rest. a day given over to God, which should be enjoyed at home and would allow their return to work on the next monday with minds more lucid and hearts better contented.

Our statesmen, in order to insure within our population a christian feeling, should survey immigration and legislate in such way that men coming towards us to earn their daily bread and wishing to become members of the Canadian family, should be able to render our country a service of some kind. Needy bodies quitting Europe in rags and tears, bringing over as their only baggage with them nothing but their impiety, pauperism, hatred and rancors of all kinds, have no right to hospitality in our midst and deserve it not.

Our statesmen should react against our own people's tendency to abandon the plough field for city work. Farmer's sons but too often get tired of their native parish:



they soon find it irksome to work the farm; they search for other sights than those offered by the beauty of the fields; they lose taste of the sweet scent wafted from the meadows and over the hills on the paternal homestead; they have the mournful courage to quit what should be so dear to them and crowd into industrial centers where they hope to meet richer earnings with lesser toil. Let us locate our folks more in the direction of our cornfields; let us lead them to farming, when such an enterprise for us is the more feasible that our's is a country larger than Europe itself and whose population about equals that of London.

Therefore it is good politics for our Government to offer our returned soldiers work on millions upon millions of acres yet uncultivated in our dear Canada and thus striving to increase the number of our hearty peasants. Such policy is of a kind to reduce the cost of living because of the increase in agricultural produce.

It must be noted that the cost of living has increased nearly a hundred per cent since war began. It is then our imperious duty to do away with the ruin scheme of monopolism.

It should be the Government's part to decree the rating of a minimum salary; so as to enable laborers to lead decent lives with their families and be insured against sickness, old age and lack of employment. It should be industry's part to foot up the cost of such insurance in favor of their own workmen.

It would also be necessary that clinical municipalities be erected wherein the poor could be attended by specialists at a reasonable price. Quite a number of diseases are met with among the unfortunate in life because they cannot sum up funds sufficient to go beyond a common practitioner's care; and such care should be gratuitous to those who cannot pay.

Farmers around Naples ploughing the vast, plain extending from Torre del Graeco to Vesuvius, can read this inscription engraved by Fonseca on the spot where the lava at one time engulfed their forefathers' home: "*Cavete posteri, vestra res agitur*; beware, ô ye our progeny, your fortune is here at stake."

Have a care, could have been voiced by the people that have preceded us on the path of life, you witness the evils we endured, you deservy their origin; let us be an example to you. It is your part to prevent the evil before it reaches you, or at least, mark you its first apparition and check the mother country on the brink of the dangerous slope she is about to slip into.

There is a social question at issue. That question is supremely serious, of supreme delicacy and supreme complexity; it summons men to speedy and equitable dealing with it and the only effective solution, is the one prompted us from the Gospel in these terms: "What of differences in social stations? It was the same earth bore our cradle and our rest to morrow is to be in the same burial-ground. It was the same God created us; by the same God shall we be judged. Let us then be brethren, and that we may be brethren, let us be christians first and love one another."

The great work of reconciliation and social fusion will be accomplished only there where reigns the christian spirit which gives abnegation, obliging the great to humble themselves, and hope preventing the lowly from being cast down. This christian spirit alone can bring about a marvellous union between wealth and poverty, in creating the rich man good and compassionate, giving generously of his superfluity, sometimes even of his necessities; in creating the poor man good and resigned, blessing God in his misery and trials, contemplating, admiring the happiness of heaven beyond the tears of earth.

Montesquieu was right in saying: "Religion, which seems to look only to heaven, is nevertheless what assures happiness to men upon earth."

† OLIVIER ELZÉAR MATHIEU,

Archbishop of Regina.

